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FOREIGN MISSIONS

REVIEWED;

With Suggestions for the Formation
OF A
FRIENDS' MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

BY
HENRY STANLEY NEWMAN,
LEOMINSTER.

"The gospel of salvation was to be preached to every creature under heaven, Christ commands it to His disciples, Go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.....You must teach and instruct Blacks and Indians and others, how that God doth pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh in these days of the New Covenant.....

"And also, you must instruct and teach your Indians and Negroes and all others, how that Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and gave Himself a ransom for all men, to be testified in due time, and is the propitiation, not for the sins of Christians only, but for the sins of the whole world."

George Fox's Epistle to Friends in America.

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FOREIGN MISSIONS.

THE first Christian Mission is, perhaps, the sending forth of the twelve apostles to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This was a home mission, and limited in its character. So also was that second commission given to the disciples, when Christ sent out the seventy, two and two, into every city and place whither He Himself would come. It was then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few," shewing that He esteemed these seventy missionaries but as a few in comparison to the many that were needed, wherefore He bid them pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest. (Luke x. 2.)

But the third Christian Mission is the one that most concerns us in the present consideration, inasmuch as it was a foreign as well as a home mission. Christ had appointed a meeting, after His resurrection, up on a mountain in Galilee, and there the farewell charge was given, to "go" and "teach all

nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

And the early Christians "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them." Being "scattered abroad," they "went everywhere preaching the word." The Holy Ghost instructed the Church to separate Barnabas and Paul for foreign service, and when the disciples had prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away. (*Acts xiii. 3.*)

At another time, the Church at Jerusalem held a conference respecting the converts among the heathen, and after "much disputing," sent forth two "chosen men" with an epistle to their distant brethren. (*Acts xv. 7.*)

Again, we find subscriptions raised to aid Paul during his missionary labours. (*Phil. iv. 15.*) Luke was "chosen of the churches" to travel with him, and was afterwards sent, with Titus and other "messengers of the churches," to Corinth.

But as zeal decayed fewer missionaries went forth to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel to the heathen. Centuries rolled away, here and there earnest men, like Patrick and Boniface, sprung up, but the perilous times came, in which those who had the form of godliness were lovers of their own selves, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

When new life dawned upon the Church in the age of the Reformation, there were again evident

signs of a true missionary spirit. Xavier and others also among the Romanists zealously laboured in foreign climes, and in the seventeenth century not a few went forth, from the Society of Friends and other British Churches, to "spread the truth abroad." In 1706, Ziegenbalg and Plutscho began their mission in Tranquebar, one of those enterprizes which owed so much of their success to the faithful efforts and prayers of Francke of Halle. Thus it appears that the great command of Christ, to go and teach all nations, has to a considerable extent been obeyed, in proportion to the amount of religious life existing in the Church.

It was not till 1732 that the Moravians of Herrnhut sent forth their first missionaries. In the course of nine or ten years this little church, scarcely numbering 600 persons, mostly exiles, sent out men to Greenland and America, to the West Indies and Lapland, to Algiers, Guinea, the Cape of Good Hope, and Ceylon.

They have now flourishing missions among Indians, Esquimaux, Hottentots, and Negroes, employing 281 missionaries. The total number of Moravians in the civilized world is only about 17,000. Thus this small church, which scarcely numbers thirty congregations in the British Isles, is providing for the oversight and education of 64,000 people in foreign lands. Well may they exclaim in their printed report, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." Christian David, a

Moravian exile, truly says, "God is pleased to effect great and excellent purposes, by means of things in themselves weak, and in the eyes of the world despicable, that His name may thereby be glorified, so that now rejoicing in His help, we can declare, with holy exultation, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'"

Dr. Carey has the credit of being one of the first men of modern times to arouse the British Churches to their great duty respecting foreign missions. God sees not as man sees, and He alone knows who to chose for His missionary service. It was a poor cobbler who formed the resolution to give to the millions of Hindoos, the Bible in their own language. But how was this new thought received?—for to the men of that day it was a new thought. What reception did it meet with at the hands of Christian professors?

At a meeting of Ministers at Northampton, William Carey rose and proposed for consideration, "The duty of Christians to attempt the spread of the gospel among heathen nations." The proposal was heard with astonishment, and their leader, a venerable man, rose up, and frowning upon him replied in a loud voice, "Young man, sit down, when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."

But Carey continued to agitate the question that so agitated his own heart, in spite of all the indolence and discouragement he met with from the

leaders of the Baptist Church. In 1792 he preached a sermon to the associated ministers at Nottingham. Firstly, he said, "Expect great things from God;" Secondly, "Attempt great things for God." With such vigour did he denounce the criminality of that indifference with which the cause of missions was treated, that Dr. Ryland said, he should not have wondered if the audience had lifted up their voice and wept. But when the Half-yearly Meeting deliberated on the subject, the old feelings of doubt and hesitation prevailed, and they were about to separate, when Carey seized Andrew Fuller by the hand and said, "Are we again going away without doing anything?" The expostulation was successful, a favourable minute was made, and the Baptist Missionary Society finally established.

Three years after this a similar proposition was brought before the General Assembly of the Scotch Kirk, in 1796, and was treated with equal contempt. The celebrated Hamilton asserted, that "to spread abroad the knowledge of the gospel among barbarous and heathen nations, seemed to him highly preposterous, inasmuch as it anticipates, nay, reverses, the order of nature. Men must be polished and refined in their manners before they can be properly enlightened in religious truths." Boyle afterwards addressed the meeting, and said, that "as for these Missionary Societies, it is the bounden duty of this House to give the

overtures recommending them our most serious disapprobation, and our immediate and most decisive opposition."

Carey found his way to Calcutta, whence he was quickly ejected by the Government, and finally found shelter in the Dutch settlement of Serampore. While he was diligently engaged in translating the Scriptures, other missionaries were spreading themselves through India; and there are now from five to six hundred actively at work in that peninsula, and more than 153,000 natives have embraced Christianity.

W. Robinson, of Dacca, after considerable experience of missionary labour, says,—“The avidity with which books are now received, is a marked feature in the present state of the Indian mission. Former periods of the mission were those of clearing and ploughing, but now the time for sowing is come. Go and preach where you will, the people will hear; carry books wherever you please, and they will be most gladly accepted. Tell our good friends at home, that the sowing time is indeed come, and that if they wish to reap bountifully, they must sow bountifully. We want men to sow the seed. It will be a sad blot on the Churches in England, if, after the ground is thus prepared for the reception of the seed, that seed is not cast in abundantly.”

We receive accounts of the crumbling away of the Hindoo systems of belief, and of the progress of

religious enlightenment. The marvellous commercial prosperity which is dawning upon India is quickly opening up the country to civilization ; and that saying of the Brahmin when he heard the gospel message, appears likely to be verified, that "Nothing can stand before the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Dr. Livingstone has remarked that, "When converts are made from heathenism by modern missionaries, it becomes an interesting question whether their faith possesses the elements of permanence, or is only an exotic, too tender for self-propagation when the fostering care of the foreign cultivators is withdrawn. If neither habits of self-reliance are cultivated, nor opportunities given for the exercise of that virtue, the most promising converts are apt to become like spoiled children. In Madagascar a few Christians were left with nothing but the Bible in their hands, and though exposed to persecution and even death itself as the penalty of adherence to their profession, they increased tenfold in numbers, and are, if possible, more decided believers now, than they were, when by an edict of the Queen of that island, the missionaries ceased their teaching."

The work of the Spirit of Truth, in bringing conviction to the hearts of these islanders through the simple reading of the Scriptures, and by holy conversation, is often strikingly evinced in their history.

A newly married couple went to purchase an idol.

The tradesman had not one ready made, and inviting them to supper, he made up his fire, and cooked his rice with the branches and chips he lopped off the new idol. A day or two afterwards a Christian called and read from the 44th of Isaiah, to the young wife, "He burneth part thereof in the fire, with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast and is satisfied—and the residue thereof he maketh a god." The woman was convinced the Bible must be true. She gave up idolatry, and afterwards suffered great persecution as a stedfast Christian.

The believers held their meetings for worship on the summit of solitary mountains, whence they could observe the approach of strangers and be without fear of interruption.

The number of those who thus met together and confided in one another, rapidly increased, and the persecution was again and again renewed. In 1837 Rasalama suffered martyrdom. Fresh names continued to be reported to the Government, and Rafaralahy was siezed and put in irons. Everything was done to extort from him the names of his companions, but he was inflexible, replying, "Here am I, let the Queen do what she pleases with me, I have done it, but I will not accuse my friends." On arriving at the place of execution, he offered up a fervent prayer for his country and for his persecuted brethren, and commending his soul to his Saviour, was speared to death in 1838.

For twenty-five years the persecution lasted, when

in 1862, the island was again opened to missionary enterprise.

Thousands now attend Christian worship, the field is but scantily supplied with labourers, and, like India, presents a most favourable opening for the establishment of a Foreign Mission.

The introduction of Christianity among the Isles of the Pacific also abounds with God's providences and interpositions. In some instances the people in expectation of the missionary ship cast away their idols, erected places for public worship, and *waited* for the coming of the messengers of peace. Before the gospel was introduced, and while the natives were expecting missionaries, "they were known to assemble at six o'clock on Sabbath morning, *sit in silence* an hour or more, and repeat this a second or even a third time during the day."

The Wesleyan Missionary Society has, according to last year's report, 909 missionaries now engaged in foreign lands, besides a much larger number of native assistants, and not a few of them are earnestly labouring in the far-off Isles of the Pacific.

John Hunt was a bright example of these self-denying labourers. In his youth he had many doubts and fears about his ministry, yet one of his elders cheered him onwards by quaintly observing, "If the Lord calls thee to the work, He'll give thee tools to work with."

For five long years he worked hard in Fiji, with little evidence of success. He translated Scriptures,

and preached and expounded ; yet for five years the Fijians continued hating one another and eating each other. But with tears of joy he lived to see God's power made manifest. Hundreds embraced Christianity, and when they had to stand the storm of persecution, they shone forth the more brightly. They maintained the gospel principles of peace in the face of war and death, compelling their enemies to exclaim that the Christian's God was too strong for them.

But when the arrow flies furthest the bow is nearest to breaking ; and John Hunt, in the height of his usefulness, was laid in the silent grave. The Spirit of God had found him an unlettered plough-boy on the broad plains of Lincolnshire, and raised him up to visit the poor Fijians, and turn many to righteousness.

The liberality of the native Christians is well worthy of remark. The people of Tahiti and the neighbouring islands contributed £527 in one year to the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Fijians subscribed £1,732 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1862. The London Missionary Society acknowledged receiving in one year more than £17,000 from its foreign mission churches.

As early as 1821 a Native Missionary Society was established in Tahiti, and a "great number of missionaries sent thence to other islands." A Native Missionary Society in the Sandwich Islands has

planted a mission on the west coast of North America. Armstrong was so stirred when the news reached home of this self-denying devotion of the native churches, that he exclaimed in the assembly, "My brethren, I am ashamed that there are so many of us here in this Christian land—we must go to the heathen."

It was in 1799, that twenty-five gentlemen banded together to found the Church Missionary Society. This Society did not send out any missionaries until five years after its formation, for no one could be found. In 1804 some Prussian subjects offered themselves, and it was not till 1814, fifteen years after the Society's establishment, that any British missionaries presented themselves. Now they have 267 missionaries abroad, yet they write in a recent report, that "applications for missionaries from many quarters, recently to the amount of twenty, are constantly coming in.....They cannot, however, be met for want of funds. In fact there is a great and general movement in the missionary field. The Spirit of God is at work, and thoughtful men are musing in their hearts what the Lord of the harvest is about to do."

The statistics of the six leading British Missionary Societies for 1864, show that they are together supporting 2211 missionaries in foreign lands, at an expense for last year of £518,000. They have also under their care between 3,000 and 4,000 native teachers and preachers.

There are many other Missionary Societies, each doing their own work, and the faithful operations of George Muller in aiding 120 home and foreign missionaries, is a humbling proof of the power of earnest zeal and prayer.

Persecution and affliction, disappointment and death, form an important part in the chronicles of these missionaries, yet under all and above all, we may see the finger of God directing and guiding them, by paths that they knew not, to wondrous fields of usefulness and fruitfulness.

It seemed a hard blow to Judson, to be expelled by the English Government from Calcutta. It seemed to him very hard to land as an outcast at Rangoon, yet who is there now but can see that a hostile Government was, through the providential guidance of an overruling God, thus made the means of introducing the gospel to Burmah?

He, and his noble-hearted fellow-workers, many of them Americans, spread themselves about the country, sowing the seed broadcast, here a little and there a little, sowing in faith through the long dark night of heathenism; sowing in sorrow, yet trusting to awake to a morning of joy. And the dew of heaven fell on the seed sown, and brought forth fruit abundantly. "It seemed," say they, "like the waking up of the popular mind to the light of Christian truth, the commencement of a mighty and speedy revolution in the religion of the country."

Multitudes visited the mission-house at Rangoon, saying, "We have heard the fame of this religion, and are come to get books. We hear that there is an eternal hell, we are afraid of it. Do give us a writing that will tell us how to escape it." Others perhaps from the very opposite quarter of the empire would say, "Sir, we have seen a writing that tells us of an eternal God, are you the man that gives away such writings? If so, give us one, for we want to know the truth." Others living near at hand, had heard of the name of Jesus and asked, "Are you Jesus Christ's man? Give us a writing that tells about Jesus Christ." Dr. Judson says that not less than 6,000 came to him in this way, to each of whom was given some book or tract or portion of Scripture, which might reveal to them the way of life.

In 1857 Dr. Mason's wife revisited Toungoo and thus writes, "Three years and a half ago I gazed over these mountains and plains, wondering if there were any of the chosen among them. Now our missionary boatman, Shapau, stands beside me, pointing to the north, south, east, and west, and says, 'Teacher, among these hills and valleys, are ninety-six churches, chapels, and schools.' Three years ago, I sent them the first book they ever saw in their own tongue; yesterday, I sat in the midst of twenty young preachers, fine, intelligent youths, all following the speaker, with open Bibles, turning from page to page with perfect ease, and with deep-

est interest. I could not but exclaim, What hath God wrought !”

Vinton, in writing home shortly before his death, says, “I found a large number of Karen villages that had never heard the first word on the subject of the Christian religion, and had never seen the face of a white man. The Karens received us with the greatest cordiality, and promised to receive teachers and build chapels. Here then, is a new field of equal promise to those of Shwaygyeen and Toungoo at the outset, shall it be overlooked ? I know of three other fields of equal promise that are not yet occupied, because the means at our command have been unequal to the undertaking. Are these Macedonian cries from so many parts of the Karen jungle never to be heard ?”

If again we turn to Africa, we see there the result of the labours of Moffat and Johnson and many others, and there too, we see the same need for fresh effort and renewed zeal. Abyssinia has need of help, the hordes of Japan and China, the friendly people on the steppes of Russia, the Belgians in their darkness, and the yearning for more light in Italy and Spain, all claim our heartfelt sympathy.

Our Heavenly Father works for the salvation of souls by the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit, yet it is also His good pleasure often to make man instrumental in the salvation of his fellow-man. The dew of heaven may fall, and yet

the land be barren for want of man to till the soil. Man may have to plant and water, ere God give the increase. God sends rain on the just and on the unjust, yet gives every man his own mission, which he alone can fulfil.

It is evident, that though there may have been much of human infirmity in the Foreign Missionary enterprise of the present century, it has been God's work, and manifestly blessed and owned by the Great Lover of souls. Few would be more ready to acknowledge the shortcomings of these missionaries than themselves; yet, as they have gone forth under a deep persuasion of a divine call, and with earnest prayers for God's guidance, their gospel message has generally met with a reception which must constrain us to acknowledge the workings of the mighty power of God.

It is equally evident that all that has been done is but as the beginning of a great work; that, at the present juncture there is a loud cry issuing forth from the harvest field of the world for more labourers.

We see that there are parts of the globe never yet visited by any European missionary. There are multitudes who have never heard one word of the glad tidings of salvation. There are many others eager to be taught, yet, for want of funds, Missionary Societies are unable to send them teachers.

Shall the piercing cry of heathendom for help be

unheard? Shall millions of our fellow-men live and die our contemporaries without our making an effort to send them the gospel message? Shall we, who feel Christ precious, refuse to give the word of reconciliation to multitudes for whom Christ died?

Some will say we must not engage in such a service without a divine call. Certainly not. Yet let us be willing to hear and ready to obey that call whenever it comes to us. We have an inward Perceptible Guide, unto whom we do well to take heed.

And has not Christ also given His Church a positive command to preach the gospel to every creature? Is then the Society of Friends fulfilling this command? Is our own Church doing all it can to spread the knowledge of the gospel among the heathen?

"A society which, in its earlier years was remarkable for nothing more than the actively aggressive and missionary character of its labours,"* should still maintain that character in its home and foreign missionary service. It would tend to the health of the Church at home, to be more actively engaged in spreading the knowledge of the gospel abroad. If our religion is better than other people's, it should bring forth better fruit.

The divine blessing has rested on the efforts of

* Richard's Life of Sturge.

not a few of our own members in their individual labours in the home missionary field. The effort of a few Friends to do good to their neighbours has often been begun in much timidity, and with an almost overwhelming sense of inefficiency, and yet has received evident tokens of divine approval and the precious blessing of the Lord of the whole earth. Home missions have sprung up among us in man's weakness but in God's power, and our Society is beginning to reap the happy fruits thereof in renewed zeal, and the increase among us of true holiness in the fear of the Lord.

If more devotion to Foreign Missions would in any way generate slackness in Home Missions, we might well pause before we committed ourselves to it, but experience proves that the foreign missionary enterprise has been supported by those who are also earnestly solicitous for the evangelization of the heathenism of our own land. Attention to Foreign Missions has not diverted the attention of the Church of Christ from its work at home. These two great departments of Christian labour have grown up together in this country and have naturally been helpful one to another.

It is with these views that it seems right again to suggest the formation of a FRIENDS' MISSIONARY SOCIETY, or the appointment of a Foreign Missionary Committee. Friends are well aware of the deep religious concern of the late George Richardson on this subject. "Would it not be

well," he queried in 1859, "that we should have a Friends' Association for aiding in the diffusion of gospel light amongst the heathen and other unenlightened nations?"

He believed that if Friends, as a religious community, heartily entertained a serious concern for the conversion of idolatrous nations, some of them would be drawn to take up their residence among the heathen.

The Yearly Meeting of 1861 deliberated on the subject, and the concern has risen and extended among us, yet hardly anything has as yet been effected in carrying it out. The solicitude of our Church for the heathen has however found expression in "An address to Friends on what may be due from them towards communicating the knowledge of the gospel to the heathen in foreign lands." This valuable address states that "some external arrangements appear to be desirable." But these external arrangements have not been made and very little has therefore been done.

A good and necessary work is often left undone until a special appointment is made to accomplish it. Many a Christian service would not have been performed if a committee had not been set apart for the object. The solitary coal, though it be alive, gives but little heat and soon cools, yet many together make a bright fire. The Church has its own great individual responsibility.

When the early Christians saw that a certain

part of their duty was neglected in the daily ministration, they looked out seven men of honest report, and appointed them to that special business.

Our early Friends, as circumstances one after another arose, appointed various meetings or committees for the carrying out the religious concerns of the Church.

But it is asked, why are not the existing arrangements sufficient for the object in view? Surely the fact that we have not at present any missionaries resident in foreign parts, is in itself an answer to such a question. It is also met by the singular fact that while many Friends feel a lively interest in Foreign Missions, we are still actually doing so little.

Again the question is put, What will this Missionary Society do when it is formed? It may collect subscriptions for the furtherance of the many branches of the missionary enterprise in which we heartily unite. It may wisely disseminate information and seek to stir us up to more zeal. And other missionary societies have been established before any missionaries offered themselves, and we must be content if we have to do the same. "God will provide Himself" the men, if we will but act in faith. Take the first step in faith, and God will find us a footing for the second.

Our Christian testimony against all war will only aid us in our onward path. The exaltation of

Christ as the Guide, and Ruler, and High Priest of every Christian assembly, can only tend to the furtherance of the Gospel.

If a minister among us feels concerned to preach the Gospel at home, he provides for his own sustenance; but if that minister is called to preach away from home, the church very rightly provides for his necessities. So the friend who is concerned for the evangelizing of the heathen in his own neighbourhood, labours for his daily bread; while the friend who is drawn forth to teach the heathen abroad, by a measure of that same spirit that constrains the acknowledged minister, may rightly have the expenses thereby incurred defrayed by the church.

Our present organization for the movements of ministering friends need not be in any way interfered with, while it is quite possible that young men and women, who are not perhaps acknowledged ministers may be the very ones, whom the love of Christ will constrain to go out, to be instrumental in turning the heathen from the worship of stocks and stones, to serve the one unseen God.

The Yearly Meeting Address of 1861 says, that "this service is not, we believe, by any means confined to ministers of the Gospel. Preaching the word is but one part of what we are to understand by missionary labour. Schoolmasters and scripture readers, combining with their more specific duties religious teaching *and conversation*, as well as in-

struction in the arts of civilization, would also find an important place."

The heathen of many lands stretch forth their hands unto us for help; and shall we not give it? Can we any longer turn aside and say, 'This is not our duty or our mission'? Is there not a voice crying aloud unto us, 'Go ye also into the vineyard and work'?

Better days are evidently dawning on our Society, and it behoves us to go boldly forward trusting in the Lord, and preparing the way for the incoming of brighter times.

Our opportunity for doing good here will soon be gone. Greyheaded men are mourning that their younger days were not more consecrated to the propagation of the Gospel; for now, when there is a more hearty will, there is less physical power. It is for us young men to take warning.

Thousands of the heathen are dying in our own time without having heard one word of Christ, and the opportunity for us to preach the Gospel to them is quickly passing away for ever. Angels might rejoice to receive such a commission, yet Christ has given to men the command. Ministers, whose memories we honour, have spent years in travelling from land to land to win souls. Is it not for some of us also to take up the cross, and be willing to go forth and reside among the heathen, if by any means we may save some?

Christ had not where to lay His head. He

suffered hunger, and reproach, and dishonour, and death to save souls, and for our sakes. "I have given you an example," said He, "that ye should do as I have done to you." Hereunto are we called, ~ because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps."

~ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."



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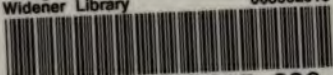
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